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OCTOBER 14, 1980

Office of the White House Press Secretary

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THE WHITE HOUSE

## STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

It is with pleasure that I sign into law the "Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1981." This legislation authorizes the appropriation of funds for our Intelligence Community. It is essential that I and those who aid me in the formulation of our nation's foreign policy make our decisions on the basis of accurate information about the capabilities and intentions of other countries and of forces that shape world events. I am pleased that the Congress has followed my recommendation and authorized sufficient funds to ensure that we continue to have the best intelligence service possible.

I am also pleased to note that this legislation contains authority for the payment of a death gratuity to the surviving dependents of intelligence personnel killed overseas as a result of hostile or terrorist activities, or in connection with an intelligence activity having a substantial element of risk. I pray that, in the future, situations will not arise that would necessitate use of this provision. It is important, however, that our intelligence officers overseas, who daily sacrifice the comforts of home to serve their country under sometimes difficult and dangerous circumstances, know that we as a nation stand behind them and will provide for the welfare of their families should tragedy strike.

In addition to providing funds for a strong intelligence service, S. 2597 also contains legislation that modifies the so-called "Hughes-Ryan Amendment" and establishes, for the first time in statute, a comprehensive system for Congressional oversight of intelligence activities. This legislation, which will help to ensure that U.S. intelligence activities are carried out effectively and in a manner that respects individual rights and liberties, was an important part of the comprehensive intelligence charter on which this Administration and the Congress have worked for over two years. Unfortunately, the press of other legislative matters prevented passage of the charter thus far in this session.

The oversight legislation that was passed does not seek to alter the respective authorities and responsibilities of the Executive and Legislative branches, but rather codifies the current practice and relationship that has developed between this Administration and the Senate and House Intelligence Committees over the past three years. This intent is evidenced by the language of the bill itself and the legislative history that stands behind it. It is noteworthy that, in capturing the current practice and relationship, the legislation preserves an important measure of flexibility for the President and the Executive Branch. It does so not only by recognizing the inherent constitutional authorities of both branches, but by recognizing that there are circumstances in which sensitive information may have to be shared

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only with a very limited number of Executive Branch officials, even though the Congressional oversight committees are authorized recipients of classified information. Circumstances of this nature have been rare in the past; I would expect them to be rare in the future. The legislation creates the expectation that a sense of care and a spirit of accommodation will continue to prevail in such cases.

I wish to thank Senators Birch Bayh, Dee Huddleston, Dan Inouye, Barry Goldwater, and Mac Mathias, and Congressmen Ed Boland, Clem Zablocki, Bill Burlison, and Ken Robinson for their significant roles in the passage of this legislation.

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